



# The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

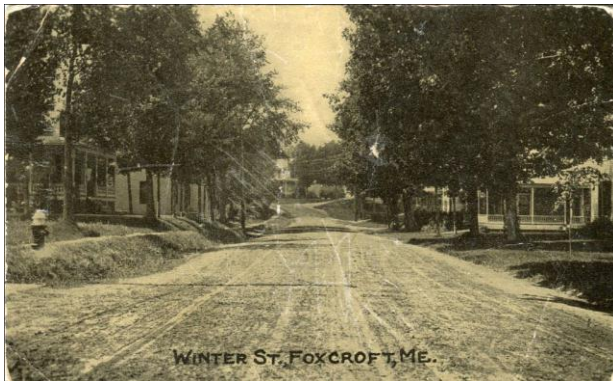
Volume XV, Number 3

Autumn 2011

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## New Streets in Dover and Foxcroft from 1865-1885

by Louis Stevens



### Inside This Issue

Streets in Dover and Foxcroft	1
Send us your photos	2
Letters from the War – Fred Kimball	3
Do you know who this child is?	3
A Labor of Love	4
The Doctor's House on Winter Street	7
Message from Mary	9
2011 Christmas Ornament Here	10
Buy a Brick for Central Hall	11

The Civil War had finally ended, so now the folks in the towns of Dover and Foxcroft and the returning veterans could start planning for new streets in the center of the towns, which would stay unconnected for another 56 years before their marriage in 1921. New country roads leading out of town to Dover South Mills and Sebec Lake to Greeley's Landing would be opened. So let's go back 146 years to learn from the news items in the *Piscataquis Observer* to read where they would be built during the 20 years from 1865 to 1885. Direct quotes are found between "and."

JULY 13, 1865: "New street in Foxcroft. A new street has been laid out starting on North and coming out on Main. The land was given by Col. S. Pillsbury, and he is now fencing the street on both sides. It bids to become one of the most beautiful streets in town." Of course, it's Winter Street, which became the access for workers on their way to Mechanic Street, Morse Street, Dwelley Avenue, and to the race track and fairgrounds on Park.

George Edes, owner/editor of the *Piscataquis Observer*, often complained about the poor conditions of sidewalks, but he could be complimentary when they were kept in repair as seen by these two items: In the May 3, 1866, edition, he wrote, "We are gratified to see that there is now being laid down a substantial string of plank sidewalks in Dover village, a lot of them finished. We understand that \$900 has been appropriated for the completion of the work on both sides of the road."

And a year later on June 27, 1867, "Our roads in Foxcroft have been mended in a very ample manner. And we would add that nearly 100 rods of plank sidewalk have been built on several of the principal streets."

But two years later, however, in April of 1868, Mr. Edes poked sharp jabs, with his pen, of course, at the same officials who were: "We would call the attention of our surveyors of roads (note: same as commissioner)

**(continued on page 6)**

## The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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The Society's legal address is 28 Orchard Road, Dover-Foxcroft ME 04426. The *Shiretown Conserver* is published quarterly. Contact the editor at 874 West Main Street, Dover-Foxcroft, Me 04426 or e-mail [chrism@roadrunner.com](mailto:chrism@roadrunner.com), or by phone at 207-564-2666

Visit us on-line at  
[www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs)  
 and on Facebook

## Send us your photos!

To date, we have cataloged a little over 5,000 photos of people, places and things in Dover and Foxcroft – with several thousand more to catalog. We have a fair number of photos of business and public buildings in the towns, but very few old photos of residences. If you have old photos of people, businesses and especially residences, won't you share them with us? We would be happy to make arrangements to scan your photos and return them to you in excellent condition. Please take a peek in that closet, or hike up to the old attic and share with us your excitement at recovering a bit of our towns' history. Contact Mary or Chris at any time.



(?)

From two old autograph books which belonged to  
 Kilby Page Sargent, Jr.

Born in Foxcroft January 27, 1879  
 Died in Melrose, Mass, Sept 9, 1965  
 He was the grandson of Col. Silas Paul

1894 – Richard H. Delano  
 "May your blessings grow and spread  
 Like butter on hot ginger bread."

Dec 31, 1894 – A. J. Stevens  
 "If scribbling in albums,  
 True friendship insures,  
 With the greatest of pleasure,  
 I will scribble in yours."

Dec 29, 1891 – Lillian M. Brown  
 "May your joys be as deep as the ocean,  
 And your sorrows as light as the foam."

Jan 13, 1892 – Helen J. Wilbur  
 "May your days be days of peace,  
 and your doughnuts fried in greese [sic]."

Jan 13 1892 – Edna M. Nichols  
 "Some write for riches,  
 some write for fame,  
 But I write simply,  
 To sign my name."

Bettina Ober – age 10  
 "When you are old and cannot see,  
 Put on your specs and think of me."

William C. Goss  
 "The best medicine  
 Joy and temperance and repose,  
 Slam the door on the doctor's nose."

Sadie M. Davis  
 "May I ask this little spot to  
 write the words Forget-me-not."

Items 2011.741 and 2011.739

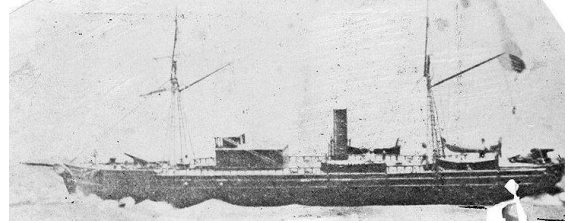
## Civil War Letters

This is the third of the letters in the Society's collection of a number of letters written during the Civil War from Fred Kimball to his family in Dover-Foxcroft. For more information on Mr. Kimball and his life, see the Spring 2011 issue of the *Conserver*.

Fred Kimball writes to his mother –

U. S. S. Ship Ohio  
Charleston, Sept 18, 1864

My Dear Mother,



I recd your kind note, enclosed in father's letter and also one from Annie. I was very glad to receive them. I rather thought I should find a word from you in the letter but Annie's was a little unexpected. It was very welcome though. I shall not be able to write Annie a separate note this time in reason to put it in the same envelope with yours + father's as I have but a few minutes to write. Hammocks are piped down already, you must not worry yourself about me as far as livery is concerned, as we have everything we want most – not all. Salt beef and tack, but fresh meat, potatoes, onions, cabbage, pork, turnips and all the cakes + pies we want, have to buy the cakes + pies. Then there's peaches, apples etc for sale here every day. Lots of reading matter for sale too. Annie need not send papers weekly as it comes here just as soon as out. There are newspapers of all kinds for sale. All the morning papers are sold here. So you see we are well provided for in most every aspect. Chauncey wished here to say that Lizzie might call to get his guitar back which I have had there to practice from –

If I am to stay here any length of time I should like to go home for a week and see you. I am hoping we may be drafted soon and be sent off somewhere – I would like to write more but have not the time. You will write when father does. Give Annie my regards + tell her to write. Write her the next time.

Fred

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## Help preserve our heritage

Do you know who this child is?



Unfortunately, neither do we. We have thousands of photos in our collection here at the Historical Society. Sadly, the majority of them have nothing to indicate who the people are in the photos, when the photos were made, or anything else that help us to keep their memories with us. We really appreciate any photos that you choose to share with us, but the folks in those photos really come alive again when we know who they are. Almost all of us know of somebody in our family who has boxes of old photos. Do your descendants and your historical society a big favor. Take a little time and memorialize your photos. With a pencil (not pen), write on the back of the photo any identifying information, including the people in the photo, the date it was taken, the place where the photo was taken and any other information that you think might be interesting to your grandchildren. If the photo is in a scrapbook, don't rely on labels under the photo. Over time photos tend to separate from the scrapbook. And don't ever use cellophane tape on your photos. Perhaps the little girl in this photo had a long and good life, and her descendants today would love to have this as a treasured keepsake. But it's not to be. She is lost to history. Don't let this happen to your family!

## A Labor of Love

John and Nancy Battick and the *Vital Records of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine*



Jack and Nancy present a copy to Mary Annis, President of the Historical Society

We at the Historical Society have just received our copy of the three volume set of the *Vital Records of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine*. In 1968 pages it covers births, deaths and marriages with over 61,000 entries – covering the period from the founding of the two towns down to, in most cases, the 1920's, the latest that many of these records can legally be made public. To assemble all of this information, they spent thousands of hours poring over hundreds of old books in the Dover-Foxcroft town office. They began this monumental work in 2008 and sent their last proofs to the publisher only a few weeks ago.

A few additional words of appreciation go to Barbara Moore, long time clerk and treasurer for Dover-Foxcroft. Over the years she has worked quietly but faithfully to restore and preserve hundreds of old town records. In fact, the vendor, who does this work for hundreds of towns and local governments, commented that our records were in the worst shape of any that they had worked on. Due to her good work over many years, the Batticks were able to assemble this magnificent collection of vital records, and the originals of these records are available to scholars for many years to come.

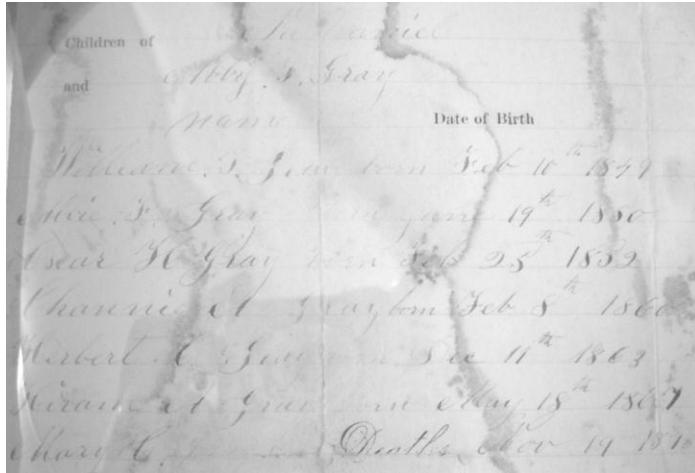
So many thanks to Barbara for such good work.



A few of the town's old records

(continued on page five)

(A Labor of Love, continued from page 4)



A sample of the records  
(Nathaniel Gray's family records)

The vital records transcription was a major task that took a little over three years to finish. For a while, the Batticks worked from the original documents at the town offices, but because the hours they could do so were limited by when the offices were open, they switched to transcribing at home from CD editions of the microfilms of the original records. This had problems because the quality of the images varied - some were totally illegible. But they carried on, noting which segments they had had to skip and would get back to in the originals.

Once Jack and Nancy finished this phase of the task, they went back to proofread their initial transcription using the originals. They especially had to pick up those portions that are illegible on the microfilm. All this was on their own laptops, making backup copies as they went so as not to lose anything. As one town's records were checked, they sent the text to Picton Press by email. There, an editor went over their submission for goofs and inconsistencies. This took more time, editing copy and sometimes having to go back to the records at the town office and straighten out the errors or just inserting "[sic]" where necessary. The many clerks' handwriting was varied as to legibility and clarity, and spellings of names, especially non-Anglo ones, were wildly varied.

The editor determined to put all the Dover records in the first volume, the Foxcroft records in the second. There are some entries made after the towns united, and these are printed within whichever volume they were entered by the town clerk. The editor then handed over the corrected, paginated texts to an indexer to create volume three. She in turn caught a few more errors or inconsistencies, which were then corrected. When the indexer was finished, she came up with over 61,000 name citations for the two volumes totaling over 1600 pages. Altogether the three volumes fall just short of 2,000 pages.

The Executive Committee of the Maine Genealogical Society then made this work a Special Publication of the Society. This requires the MGS to purchase a block of copies and offer them to MGS members at a slight price reduction - hence the entry on the covers and title pages, "MGS Special Publication No. 67." It means that the work is specially recommended and gives it a cachet of importance.

Our deepest and most profound thanks go to the Batticks for this tremendous service to the community.

If you would like your own copy of the Vital Records, they are available from Picton Press for \$249.95. <http://www.pictonpress.com/store/show/3596>



to the dilapidated sidewalks on Pleasant street in Foxcroft (note: later called Main) In Dover there is a little strip of sidewalk that in wet weather is completely submerged. If the town authorities cannot have it replaced, let a boat be placed there after a rain for the accommodation of passers." The sidewalks were made of planks then.

On JUNE 11, 1868, he wrote, "Anyone interested in contemplation of old ruins will do well to troll down to the bridge (note: on Lincoln) crossing the brook. He will witness here every stage of decay as exhibited in bridge railing. It shows much better viewed as a picturesque sight than as an example of energy in town authorities."

Another pet peeve of Mr. Edes was speeding with horses, of course. Under an editorial headline saying, "FAST DRIVING" (in heavy type), on AUGUST 15, 1867, he wrote, "There is a law against fast driving through our streets which ought to be put in force through the carelessness of fast driving." At that time it was illegal to trot a horse through the two covered bridges over 6 MPH, not 25 as today.

JULY 23, 1868: "The new road in the vicinity of Austin Pratt's in Foxcroft (now known as Goff's Corner on the Sebec Lake road) is now complete and will be a benefit to the pleasure seekers (note: maybe folks going for a cruise on the lake?) as it cuts off many hills they have had to climb."

OCTOBER 8, 1868: A new street is to be opened through the farm of Mr. Mayo in Dover from south of the Court House and near the dwelling of Asa Getchell (note: on Court) to intersect the road leading to Dexter. There are some 25 house lots for sale." Now HighStreet.

JULY 15, 1869: "A new street recently completed in Foxcroft is about 100 rods long and opens to the public about 30 new lots. It is called Spring Street."

AUGUST 18, 1870: Dover has just completed a road leading from the main street (now East Main) to the depot near the residence of Dr. Cochrane (note: last home on Lincoln Street on the river side). The need for this came now that the Bangor & Piscataquis train station, finished in December of 1869, was located at the top of the present Depot Street section before it became part of the Fairview Avenue road.

The Observer made this request on SEPTEMBER 29, 1870: "Street lamps are very much needed in some of our walks these dark nights, or surveyors to repair their old ragged sidewalks to save the lives of their fellow beings." But no further mention of lights was made at that time.

Two more sidewalk complaints. The first appeared in the paper on JULY 27, 1871: "The sidewalks on North and Pleasant (West Main) resemble Granite Mt. in this respect--they are a little rocky." And on OCTOBER 26, 1871: "The plank sidewalk on Main in Dover is not necessarily ornamental to this pretty village or in a very consistent condition for travellers. Considerable cussing is manifested as a consequence."

Today, 140 years later, some papers would take delight in telling what was said with letters in the words indicated by some \_\_\_\_s

Now, a fine compliment from the editors of the Observer, Fred Barrows and Samuel Edes, on JULY 16, 1874: GENEROUS GIFT. Sometime since the citizens of these two places called a meeting for the purpose of naming the various streets. They chose a committee, who, after naming the streets, neglected to do their duty; and consequently not one in 10 knows the names of all the streets in town. We are glad to know that one gentleman has had the enterprise enough to make and paint little nameboards and place them upon the corners of the various streets.

This gentleman is Dr. Henry Robinson of Foxcroft, whom everybody knows, who looks to the improvement of these places."

Two roads, not streets, soon came into existence to make it easier for teams hauling lumber or pulling vehicles filled with humans. The first was completed in the early summer of 1875 after the residents of Foxcroft decided to build a road around Gilman Hill, and to shorten the previous route via the Foxcroft Center Road to what is now called Greeley's Landing. The new road would pass up to and between the Gilman house and barn and intersect a road near the Pratt farm.

The other road was ready for use in the early spring of 1886. It started on Grove Street and went in a direct route to what is now called Brann's Mill or Merrill's Mill in Dover South Mills, when there was a sawmill operated by the Merrill family at the start of Black Stream. The road eliminated both Woodbury Hill and Bear Hill by keeping to their right. Once it avoided them, it was nearly level ground. Martin French, who lived on the French Road, its name today, at Dover South Mills, recalled his father, Frank French, saying that he would take this route when hauling lumber from the mill to the Dover train station for shipment out of town via Bangor. Later, with the freight trains going between Dexter and Foxcroft, there was a flag stop in West Dover where the Sangerville Line Road and the Shaw Road, as they are named today, meet.

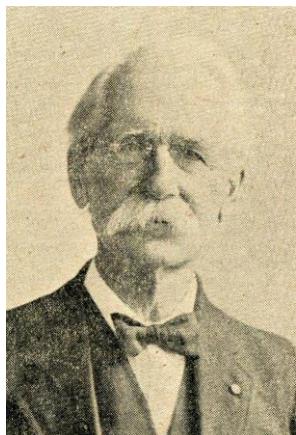
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## The Doctors' House on Winter Street

The house at 5 Winter Street, now the dental office of Drs. Steinke and Caruso, has been the abode and offices of medical personnel longer than any other site in Dover-Foxcroft. Built in approximately 1870 by W.W. Clark, it was first the home of C.D. Paine, a prominent local clothier. In 1879 he sold the home to Thomas F. Dyer, of Dyer & Hughes Organ company fame. Mr. Dyer, born in 1833, early showed an aptitude for music and for inventiveness. At age 16 he constructed a melodeon out of materials on his family farm – an old bedstead, animal skins and an old copper kettle. In 1854, he contracted gold fever and spent several years in the California gold fields. Returning to Maine, and eventually to Foxcroft, he joined John Hughes in the grocery business. Closing out the grocery business, they developed Dyer & Hughes's organ factory from which they shipped thousands of organs and pianos all over the world. With his love of music, Mr. Dyer organized and ran for many years a local band (Dyer's Band).



(The Doctors' House, from page 7)



Thomas Franklin Dyer

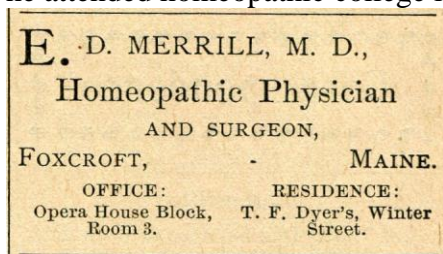
He and his wife Frances had one child, Lora, born in 1860. Lora, inheriting her father's aptitude for music, attended the New England Conservatory of Music and for most of her life was the organist at the Congregational Church and taught piano to hundreds of students in Foxcroft and Dover. In 1888 Lora married Dr. Elmer Delmont Merrill. Upon Mr. Dyer's retirement from business, he and his wife moved to California, returning often to visit their daughter. Mrs. Dyer passed away in 1899, and Mr. Dyer continued to winter in California, spending his summers in Foxcroft. In 1916 he sold the house to his daughter, reserving to himself the room where he lived until his death



Lora Dyer Merrill

in March of 1922. Lora died in October of 1936. Her obituary in the *Observer* noted, "The teaching of the piano, especially to beginners, is a trying task, and unless one possesses a sincere desire to advance the cause of music, coupled with infinite patience with and love for young people, she will not succeed in her profession. These qualities Mrs. Merrill possessed and was therefore most successful in her work...She was friendly and considerate to everyone and many are those who will long remember her cheering smile and gracious personality." Upon her death the house passed to her husband E.D. Merrill, who lived there until his death in September of 1949.

Dr. Merrill was an interesting and much loved personality in Dover and Foxcroft. Born in 1865, he attended homeopathic college in Philadelphia. After graduation in 1886, he opened his office



in Foxcroft. He practiced continuously almost up to his death. According to the *Observer*, "Dr. Merrill's practice began in the 'horse and buggy' era. He traveled thousands of miles in wagon or sleigh, through hub deep mud or blinding blizzard to reach his patients. He considered he had vastly increased his comfort when he secured a covered top sleigh to protect him partially from winter

winds, and when automobiles came into use, many of his troubles were over. He was a typical country doctor who allowed nothing to interfere with his reaching a patient." Continuing the musical traditions in the family, Dr. Merrill had a beautiful bass voice. He sang in the Congregational Church and took part in many entertainments in the towns. Dr. Merrill was a charter member of the Kiwanis Club in Dover-Foxcroft.

(Continued on page 10)



### Message from Mary

We close another summer after many successful projects. In June we had a Whoopie Pie Festival and in August our Homecoming Weekend. Our *Observer* Building museum was open for each event and hosted many visitors.

Next year, 2012, is special. Both Foxcroft and Dover were made towns in 1812; thus we will be celebrating our bicentennial. We have several items in our collection going back to that year, and also 1912, when we celebrated our centennial. We plan to have these items on display in the front room of the museum. If you have anything you would be willing to lend us for this exhibit, please let us know.

Thanks to everyone who helped out this summer. We couldn't do what we do without your energy.

Mary

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### Annual Dues

Many thanks to all those who have sent in their Historical Society dues for 2011. We really appreciate having you as a member. If you haven't sent in your dues yet, please do so now so that you can continue to enjoy all of the benefits of membership in the Historical Society, including receiving copies of the *Conserver*.

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#### The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society – Membership Application Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues are \$10 per person and \$7.00 for senior memberships. Please make checks payable to: Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, 874 West Main Street, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. Dues cover January to December. If you are giving a gift membership, please include the name and address and we'll gladly notify the recipient of your gift.

The Society is on the Web at [www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs) and on Facebook.

(**The Doctors' House**, from Page 8)

In 1957 the house passed to Dr. Harold "Hap" Gerrish, a prominent local dentist. Dr. Gerrish was born in 1930 in Milo. Raised in Augusta, he was a fine musician, playing for 3 years with the Boston Pops orchestra under Arthur Fiedler. In 1957 he started his dental practice in Dover-Foxcroft. He was a very active member of the Dover-Foxcroft Kiwanis Club (perfect attendance for 49 years!). In 1986 he passed his practice, and the house, over to Dr. Steinke who, together with his daughter, Hillary Caruso, runs it to this day.



Drs. Gerrish and Steinke  
(some years ago.....)

## Our Corporate Sponsors

A grateful thank you to the following businesses whose funds support the Society and its efforts to preserve our history. When you shop or see these folks, please tell them 'thank you' for their support!

Bob's Farm Home and Garden  
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Mayo Regional Hospital  
McKusick Petroleum  
Rowell's Garage  
Steinke and Caruso Dental Care  
Mark Stitham, M.D.  
Sean Stitham, M.D.

## 2011 Christmas Ornament

We have just received the new 2011 glass Christmas ornament. This year's ornament is of the Thompson Free Library. These and all other ornaments are available for \$6.00 each + \$4.00 shipping.

## Other Items Available

### Glass Christmas ornaments:

- 2008/Blacksmith Shop
- 2009/Observer Building and
- 2010/Central Hall

### DVD's \$10.00 + \$3.00 shipping

- Scenes of old Dover and Foxcroft:
- Louis Stevens and memories of Central Hall

### Throws: \$38.00 + \$8.00 shipping

Some of these items are available at Mr. Paperback.

### Work Day at the Historical Society

Thursdays are almost always workdays at the Historical Society. We generally start work at about 10:00 and work from two to four or five hours. If you are interested in joining us for an interesting and enjoyable day working with good friends, contact Mary for more information. At the moment we are cataloging thousands of old *Observer* photos. Come along and help us identify folks in those pictures.

# FRIENDS OF CENTRAL HALL

## FUNDRAISING BRICKS

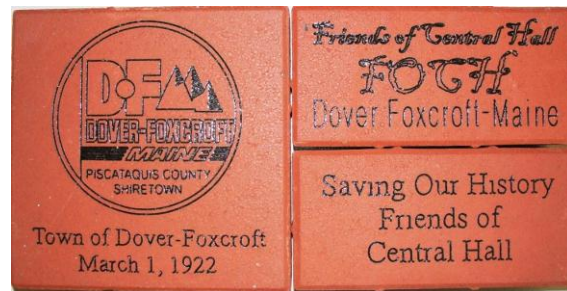
### FOCH BRICK ORDER FORM



**Help Friends of Central Hall (FOCH) preserve and restore CENTRAL HALL** by purchasing your engraved brick. Buy a brick in memory of a loved one, your children or family. Buy a brick to promote your business or organization. Artwork or your business logo can be added to the engraved bricks. Each sponsored brick would be a visible part of the walkway to a newly renovated CENTRAL HALL in downtown Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. All proceeds raised from the commemorative brick program will be used toward the restoration of CENTRAL HALL.

**ENGRAVED BRICKS** are 4"x8" or 8"x8" and allow for 15 spaces per line and up to 6 lines of text. Clip-Art and business logos can be added for an extra fee. We have selected Moonbeam Laser Engraving of Levant, Maine. The "Whitaker Greer #30" clay brick, a beveled edge brick, and vector engraving enable the etching to turn into glass. Create a lasting memory for a loved one or promote your business or

organization for a lifetime, by contributing to the preservation of Dover-Foxcroft town history.



Please fill out order form below and return to: **FRIENDS OF CENTRAL HALL**, Attention: Mary Annis, 28 Orchard Road, Dover-Foxcroft ME 04426, or call Mary at 564-0820. Please make your check or money order payable to: **Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society**.

_____ 4"x8" ENGRAVED BRICK(s) with 15 spaces/line and (3) lines of print	<b>\$100.00</b>	\$ _____
_____ 8"x8" ENGRAVED BRICK(s) with 15 spaces/line and (6) lines of print	<b>\$200.00</b>	\$ _____
_____ Basic Logo you supply in .eps format - add \$50.00 per brick	<b>\$50.00/ea</b>	\$ _____
_____ In addition to, or in place of purchasing a brick, I wish to donate to FOCH	<b>DONATION</b>	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$ _____

*(For additional artwork options or clip-art details, contact Bob and Lisa Bemis, Moonbeam Laser Engraving, 207-884-8372)*

**PEASE USE LINES BELOW FOR YOUR TEXT – 15 spaces each including punctuation and spaces - text will be centered**

<b>Line 1:</b>	_____
<b>Line 2:</b>	_____
<b>Line 3:</b>	_____
<b>Line 4:</b>	_____
<b>Line 5:</b>	_____
<b>Line 6:</b>	_____

Please provide contact information below:

Name(s) or Business Name _____	Phone _____
Mailing Address _____	
City, State, Zip _____	Email Address _____

*The mission of the **Friends of Central Hall** is to preserve, restore to its former glory, maintain, and operate Central Hall as an event center that showcases small town America and promotes a vibrant Main Street by joining forces with those seeking to revitalize the community.*

Document comparison done by DeltaView on Saturday, September 03, 2011 11:58:19 AM

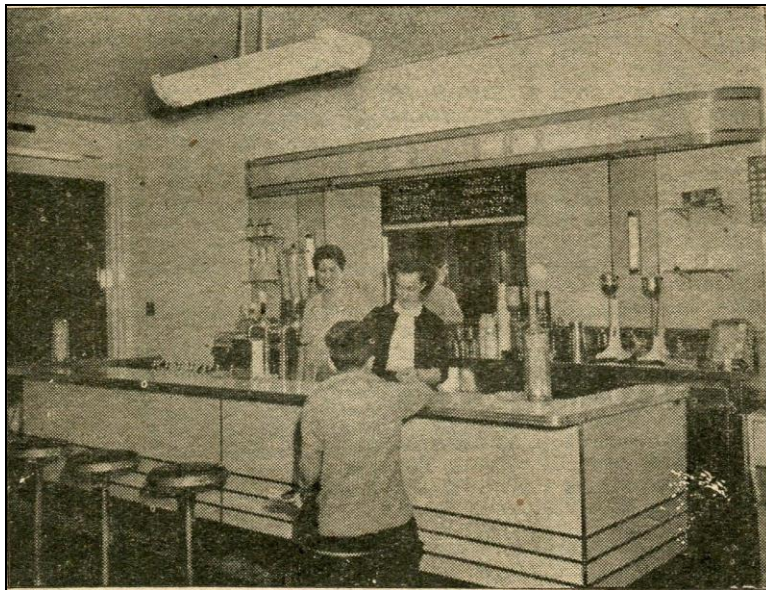
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Style change	0
Format changed	0
Total changes	2

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If you do, share your memories with us. Send a note to Mary or Chris.